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ABSTRACT

Reviewed is the historical background of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and described are the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system and CEC's literature collection entitled "Exceptional Child Education Resources" (ECER). Plans for the Council's future, including the development of its own computer system for information, are mentioned. (SBH)

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CEC AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION CENTER

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147

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Introduction

In viewing the subject of information, one cannot escape the fact that an information explosion is occurring world wide. The very fact that we are convened here in Stirling at the first World Congress on Future Special Education is a testimony to this.

History bears out the fact that during the course of human civilization, four information revolutions have taken place, and a fifth is now well underway. Interestingly, the fruits of all five of these revolutions, the invention of language, the invention of writing and printing, the introduction of mass media, the invention of the computer, and finally, the marriage of telecommunications and computers have or are not merging in order to make this World Congress become a reality. Portions of the proceedings of this Congress will be relayed via satellite and other telecommunication systems to listeners in the Eastern United States and Canada.

Hubert H. Humphrey, the late Senator from Minnesota, was the U. S. Congress' champion of information dissemination, its greatest enthusiast, its foremost spokesman. By the late 1950's, his crusade was international. He wanted

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A GLOBAL NETWORK OF INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSES, AN INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF SYSTEMS. "JUST THINK, MY FRIENDS, SOMEWHERE, SOME UNKNOWN SCIENTIST MAY HAVE DISCOVERED THE CLUE WHICH WILL HELP TO CONQUER CANCER." HE SAID IN 1958. "HOW ARE WE EVER GOING TO FIND OUT? IF THE SCIENTIST IS FOREIGN, HIS FINDINGS MAY NOT EVEN HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH. WHAT A TRAGEDY IF THE NATIONS DON'T COOPERATE TO TRANSLATE, TO ABSTRACT, TO INDEX, TO REVIEW, TO TEST POTENTIALLY LIFE-SAVING INFORMATION!"

HIS PLEA WAS ECHOED AND HEEDED IN THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD AND THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY. THE SUBJECT OF THIS PANEL, "IMPROVING INSTRUCTION THROUGH THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON INSTRUCTIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION", SO ABLY INTRODUCED BY DR. ASHCROFT, REFLECTS IN PART THE EDUCATOR RESPONSE.

AS AN ORGANIZATION, THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN HAS BEEN VERY MUCH A PART OF THE RAPID GROWTH AND DEVELOPMETN OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION. FOUNDED IN 1922, WE HAVE A 55-YEAR HISTORY OF SEEKING AND DISCOVERING NEW AND CREATIVE WAYS OF ADVANCING THE EDUCATION OF ALL EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN. MOST OF OUR ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CENTERED ABOUT THE COLLECTING AND DISSEMINATING OF PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION RELATED TO THE EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN, BOTH HANDICAPPED AND GIFTED. THE TYPES OF INFORMATION WE HAVE AND CONTINUE TO COLLECT, PRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE, AND THE AUDIENCES WE SERVE ARE VAST AND VARIED. OUR LEADERS, PAST AND PRESENT,

ARE VISIONARY PEOPLE. THE CEC PUBLICATION AND PRODUCT LINE HAS GROWN FROM A TINY BEGINNING TO NEARLY 200 TITLES. OUR VOICES HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH THOSE OF OTHER ADVOCATES IN ASSURING THE PASSAGE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL SPECIAL EDUCATION LEGISLATION. PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING THROUGH ATTENDANCE AT CEC-SPONSORED CONVENTIONS, INSTITUTES AND WORKSHOPS.

SINCE 1966, WE HAVE SERVED AS TWO-THIRDS OF WHAT MIGHT BE TERMED THE SPECIAL EDUCATION DISSEMINATION TRIANGLE. I WOULD LIKE TO DEVOTE THE REMAINDER OF MY PAPER TO A HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF OUR TWO-THIRDS, THE ERIC SYSTEM AND EXCEPTIONAL CHILD EDUCATION RESOURCES, AND SAY THAT DR. ASHCROFT WILL DESCRIBE THE REMAINING THIRD, THE NATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS INFORMATION SYSTEM.

AS AN OUTGROWTH OF CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN THE 1960'S, SEVERAL EDUCATION-RELATED INFORMATION COLLECTIONS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED. MOST OF THESE COLLECTIONS BEGAN IN A PRINT FORMAT. IN SOME CASES, A COMPUTERIZED DATA BASE FORMAT WAS BEGUN CONCURRENTLY; IN OTHER INSTANCES, THIS FORMAT WAS INTRODUCED LATER. PERHAPS THE MOST WIDELY KNOWN AND USED OF THESE IS THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC), WHICH MARKS ITS INCEPTION IN 1965 AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST 10 ERIC CLEARINGHOUSES IN JUNE 1966. ONE OF THIS ORIGINAL 10 WAS THE ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN. ITS HOST ORGANIZATION WAS AND CONTINUES TO BE THE COUNCIL FOR

Exceptional Children.

In the summer of 1966, CEC received a grant from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH) of the U. S. Office of Education to establish a comprehensive program for printed professional literature. Concurrent with the reception of the BEH grant and the establishment of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Exceptional Children, CEC planted the CEC Information Center in the education landscape. Since 1966, the CEC Information Center has served in dual roles, as ERIC Clearinghouse and as Information Center for CEC, thus becoming two legs of the secial education triangle.

From 1966 to 1974, the Clearinghouse, though funded by BEH and CEC monies, performed all the normal functions of an ERIC Clearinghouse including the input of exceptional child education literature into the ERIC printed publications Research in Education and Current Index to Journals in Education, and the ERIC computerized data base. In 1974, at the termination of our BEH grant, the National Institute of Education (NIE) issued an RFP for the Clearinghouse. CEC competed for and was awarded what is now called the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children. Our functions as a Clearinghouse have continued without interruption regardless of name and funding source change, through the entire 12-year period.

Simultaneously, during the 12 years of the ERIC project, the Information Center has developed a comprehensive private

COLLECTION OF COPYRIGHTED AND UNCOPYRIGHTED ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE ENTITLED Exceptional Child Education Resources or ECER.

THE FOCUS OF OUR DOCUMENT ACQUISITION EFFORTS IS ON BOTH THE HANDICAPPED AND THE GIFTED -- ALL EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH; THOSE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE PRENATAL PERIOD ON, WHO DEVIATE FROM WHAT IS PERCEIVED AS NORMAL IN THE COGNITIVE, SENSORY, AFFECTIVE, PHYSICAL, AND BEHAVIORAL DOMAINS; PERSONS REQUIRING A PROGRAM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ANCILLARY SERVICES.

DOCUMENTS IN THE ECER COLLECTION MAY BE OF A PRINT OR NONPRINT NATURE INCLUDING BOOKS, MONOGRAPHS, RESEARCH REPORTS, LITERATURE GUIDES, CURRICULUM GUIDES, PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS, JOURNAL ARTICLES, DISSERTATIONS, PAMPHLETS, NEWSLETTERS, FILMS, CASSETTES, FILMLOOPS, FILMSTRIPS, VIDEOTAPES, AND OTHER RELATED MATERIALS.

TOPICS SUCH AS INSTRUCTION, COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE, ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL, PREPARATION OF PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL, SUPPORT SERVICES, INSTITUTIONAL PLACEMENT AND DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION, FEDERAL AND STATE LAW, POLICY AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, LITIGATION, INCIDENCE AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS WHICH WILL BE BENEFICIAL IN THE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR AND PLACEMENT OF THEIR HANDICAPPED AND GIFTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE INCLUDED.

From the beginning this collection has been publicly available in two formats, the quarterly abstract journal entitled Exceptional Child Education Resources, and the computerized data base.

Everyone world wide can use ECER and the ERIC collection by subscribing to the printed abstract journals or initiating computer searchers through any organization, including CEC, having access to DIALOG or BRS computer search services. The DIALOG service is now available throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and much of Europe. BRS is a United States system only.

Soon, CEC plans to develop its own computer system for information. The system will be developed so that all types of information can be stored including professional, instructional, legislative and other types of information. Utilizing our own computer and the use of telephone, teletype and possibly satellite communications, we may someday be in position to provide instantaneous service to the Special Education Community.

Looking into the future, the CEC Information Center hopes to increase foreign acquisitions for inclusion in the professional literature section. Now we are limited to what is available in the English language and we have not succeeded in developing translation capabilities necessary to provide documents from other languages to CEC information facility users.

To conclude:

1. CEC hopes to soon have fully developed capability for entering, processing and disseminating all kinds of information about special education.

2. We will welcome the reception of information appropriate to the field of special education from any country which has been translated into the English language..

In his paper, Dr. Ashcroft referred to a meeting several years ago at which we considered acquiring materials from other countries. As a result of this and other efforts, we now receive 23 journals from foreign countries. We regularly select articles from all of them. About 5% of the book type documents we acquire come from foreign countries. All of them are not selected for entrance in ECER because they are not available to our users. We currently have 789 references from foreign coutnries in ECER. This is out of a total collection of 30,000 or about 2% of the total collection. Twenty-nine countries have one or more documents which are about those countries. We hope and expect to increase our sources of information from other countries.

3. CEC will be pleased to cooperate with any appropriate national agency from any country which has a significant body of professional information.

We believe the achievement of these goals is possible and that the international exchange of professional information in special education is a distinct possibility.